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THE GARDEN CALENDAR.

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

A radio discussion by W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, and broadcast by a network of 49 associate NBC radio stations, Tuesday, March 7, 1933.

---ooOoo---
Hello, Folks: This morning, I noticed that one of my plum trees is showing a little green, and that my raspberries are beginning to push out a trifle which means that the season for final dormant spraying and for pruning is upon us here at Washington. Another point, if we intend to plant any small fruits this spring, we will have to do the work in the near future. I think it usually pays to grow certain fruits, especially for our own home use, particularly the small fruits, because they come into bearing so quickly, and we don't have to wait several years for them to come into bearing.

Take strawberries, for example. As I have said on several occasions, the strawberry is the one fruit that can be grown everywhere, North, South, East and West. The methods of planting and culture vary somewhat in the different localities, but the fruit is just the same delicious and refreshing food no matter where it is grown. Spring planting of strawberries is recommended for a large part of the country, and it's time now to be looking around to locate some good plants of desirable varieties. Most of our leading varieties of strawberries are what we term perfect, that is, they self pollinate, and will produce fruit where only one variety is planted. A few of our varieties are imperfect and require that another variety be planted near to pollinate them. Among the best varieties of strawberries for home use in the south are Klondike, Missionary, Aroma, and the new variety known as Blakemore. Further north, say in the latitude of Washington and St. Louis, the Howard 17, sometimes called Premier, the Chesapeake and the new Dorsett, are excellent. In the more northern sections the Howard 17 and Dunlap are good.

You folks who live in the South have the advantage that you can have strawberries on your tables for three or four months during the winter and early spring, but I am willing to grow strawberries in my garden in order to enjoy the fresh fruit over a period of three or four weeks. While we are on the subject of growing strawberries for home use, let me suggest, that, if possible, you select a section of the garden or some piece of ground that is reasonably free from weeds, because of the difficulty of keeping the strawberries clean. It also pays to have the rows fairly wide apart, say $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet so that the middles between the rows can be kept cultivated. As a rule, strawberries for home use are grown in matted rows, that is, the original plants are set perhaps 24 inches apart and the runners allowed to form a fairly large number of new plants covering a strip of ground about a foot to 18 inches wide. Where the runners are removed and the plants kept in hills you can plant them closer.

Another point I want to mention is the importance of preparing the ground thoroughly before you plant your strawberries, and this will hold for all of the small fruits. You see the strawberries will occupy the ground two, and perhaps three, years during which time there is no opportunity to work the soil deeply, so, deep and thorough preparation is very important. Another point is fertilizers and it pays to fertilize the soil well in advance of planting. I prefer a mixture

of equal parts of finely ground raw bone meal and cottonseed meal, because that type of fertilizer acts rather slowly, but its effect is lasting. At any time the strawberries are not making a satisfactory growth, and there is plenty of moisture in the soil, you can apply a little nitrate of soda, say about a pound to 100 feet of row. You can scatter the nitrate broadcast over the plants, then take a branch of a tree and brush it off of the leaves. A good time to sow the nitrate is just before a rain. Of course, nitrate of soda makes the fruit grow fast and rather soft so that it should not be used to any extent where the berries are to be shipped.

You folks in the South can't do much with raspberries, except possibly the variety known as Van Fleet, but we may soon have some more new varieties for southern sections. You can grow the most delicious dewberries, however, and I don't know of anything much nicer than fine, well ripened dewberries. The old-fashioned wild dewberries were mostly seeds, but our new and improved varieties like Lucretia, Mayes and the Young or Youngberry are wonderful when they are well ripened. I believe it pays to have your dewberries trained on stakes or on a trellis. I've seen some wonderful commercial fields of dewberries in North Carolina that were trained on stakes, and it struck me that the stake method would be equally good for the home garden.

In the central northern sections raspberries grow to a queen's taste, and there is a wide range of varieties, including the reds, the yellow and the black-caps. All are good and it is largely a matter of personal taste as to the variety or varieties you select. Blackberries grow wild in many places, but the cultivated blackberries are so superior that it pays to grow them for home use. It used to be great fun to go blackberrying; I guess it still is in some sections, but I prefer to just go out to my own small fruit garden and pick my blackberries without any fear of blacksnakes, hornets' nests or harvest mites, otherwise known as chiggers.

I believe it pays to grow certain of the small fruits for home use and that is my reason for bringing the matter of planting them to your attention today. As I said, the buds are swelling, or soon will be, and we have very little time to be making our arrangements for plants. Perhaps a good neighbor may have plants and can supply you, at least let's make an attempt to get some new plantings of small fruits made this spring.
